REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-15, which are all of the pending claims, under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over the prior art. Specifically, Claims 1-4, 6-9 and 11-14 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,832,268 (Anderson, et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,263,339 (Hirsch); and Claims 5, 10 and 15 were rejected as being unpatentable over Anderson, et al. in view of Hirsch and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,301,579 (Becker).

Applicant is herein amending independent Claims 1, 6 and 11 to improve the form and readability of the claims and to better define the subject matters of these claims. Also, this opportunity is being taken to amend the specification to update the references on page 1 to the copending applications.

For the reasons advanced below, Claims 1-15, as presented herewith, patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. The Examiner is, accordingly, respectfully requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejections of, and to allow, Claims 1-15.

The present invention, generally, relates to object oriented computing environments. More specifically, the invention provides support to display visually predefined aspects of the objects and complex objects. For instance, this visual support may be used to define a simple object that participates in a complex object, for the presentation and manipulation of normalized data, for computed fields, or for summary fields.

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The primary reference, Anderson, et al, relied on by the Examiner to reject the claims provides a detailed discussion of object oriented programming systems. As the Examiner has recognized, Anderson, et al, however, does not disclose the visual support that is provided by the present invention. Because of this, the Examiner relies on Hirsch for its disclosure of visual support.

While Hirsch discloses a visual system for building computer applications, the visual support provided by Hirsch is limited. The technique that Hirsch uses applies to property sheets, not to fields included as a part of the database record. His visual support does not include support for selecting the source columns, and its description of implementation (Col. 14, line 35 through Col. 15, line 13) does not allow for different kinds of operands (the only one described is string concatenation), performing numeric operations, the ability to handle source columns of various data types, and most important, the ability to use parentheses in the formula to control the order of execution. The Hirsch patent does not claim to have these capabilities, it does not describe how to implement these features, and it is by no means evident from what it does disclose how they could be implemented.

Independent Claims 1, 6 and 11 are herein being amended to emphasize the differences between the claims and the prior art. Specifically, each of the claims is being amended to include the limitation that the visual support is used to display visually predefined aspects of the attributes and relationships of the objects and complex objects to allow programmatic support for data navigation, presentation and manipulation.

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As discussed in detail in the present application, this feature is of utility because it facilitates the use of visual support in an object oriented computing environment and, in this way, reduces the amount of customized programming that must be generated.

The other references of record have been reviewed, and these other references are no more pertinent than Anderson, et al. and Hirsch.

In particular, Becker was cited for its disclosure of visual support for summary fields. The Becker patent makes a cryptic reference to a summary field, but it in no way describes the ability to select which subobject to summarize, how to select what field to summarize on, or the possibility of selecting different summary functions. It is not even clear from the Becker patent that it provides any visual support for determining a summary function – rather it merely describes performing a canned summarization on one of its constructs.

Because of the above-discussed differences between Claims 1, 6 and 11 and the prior art, and because of the advantages associated with those differences, Claims 1, 6 and 11 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claims 2-5 are dependent from Claim 1 and are allowable therewith; and Claims 7-10 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 6. Similarly, Claims 12-15 are dependent from Claim 11 and are allowable therewith.

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Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejections of Claims 1-15 under 35 U.S.C. §103, and to allow these claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is asked to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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